

Frugal Vegetarian Appendix: How to Eat Healthy on \$29 A Week

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You've hit hard times and you need to eat to survive until the next job, diploma, or well-earned entitlement check arrives. After you've flipped for rent and insurance, head over to the nearest discount grocery store and stock up on these essentials.



Fresh Basil

CONDIMENTS

Condiments are your basic spices and herbs, and sauces. These are your best friends in the kitchen. If larger sizes are available of your favorites, go for it.

SAVORY

Basil -- essential in tomato dishes, Italian, and Spanish cuisine

Black Pepper -- time-honored spice

Chili Powder -- adds zing to beans, eggs, cheese, and tomato dishes

Complete Seasoning (Badia, McCormick, et al) -- great when you're in a hurry, this blend relies heavily on dried onion and garlic. *Note: Badia Complete contains MSG, so avoid if you're allergic to it.*

Cumin -- best for slow-cooking dry beans

Curry Powder -- a necessity in Indian and also used in Caribbean cuisine

Italian Seasoning -- usually a blend of rosemary, basil, oregano, and other spices

Oregano -- favorite in most Italian dishes

Powdered Garlic -- economical and blends well with most dishes

Powdered Onion -- another money-saver if fresh is unavailable
Red Pepper -- a more fiery alternative to black pepper
Rosemary -- ideal in soups, roasted veggies, and cooked fruit
Sage -- great for vegetable soup, and rice dishes
Sea Salt -- healthier alternative to regular salt
Thyme -- livens up greens and potatoes

SWEET

Allspice -- has flavors of nutmeg, cloves, and cinnamon; good in chili
Cinnamon -- a must for baked goods, toast, and oatmeal
Coriander -- like ginger but sweeter, good in Indian and similar dishes
Ginger -- again, for baked goods, as well as Asian cooking

SAUCES

Apple Jelly -- toast, baked goods, et al; works as fruit sauce melted
Applesauce -- desserts, baked goods, sweet & sour sauces
Brown Mustard -- great with potatoes, cheese sandwiches, salad dressings
Canola Oil -- heart-healthy and bland enough for multiple uses: frying, salads, baking
Ketchup -- or Catsup; multiple uses
Lemon Juice -- as above
Lime Juice -- soft drinks, tea, coffee, salads, Latino cuisine
Mayo -- good in salads and sandwiches
Orange Marmalade -- baked goods, toast, and Asian cooking
Soy Sauce -- preferable low-sodium, essential in Asian dishes
Vinegar -- apple cider or red wine varieties are best

-----FRESH PRODUCE



Tomatoes and Cucumbers

These are the least expensive fresh produce (vegetables and fruit); some, like tomatoes, grapes, corn and citrus, are seasonal buys. Go for long-lasting fruit with thicker skins; berries tend to not only be expensive (unless you buy at roadside stops, or Aldis) but go bad faster. If you have no a/c, put bananas in the refrigerator; the skin will brown but the fruit inside will stay firm for a week or so. Use any fruit with slightly mushy parts ASAP in baked goods, pancake batter, or fruit sauce.

VEGETABLES

Cabbage
Carrots
Celery
Corn
Cucumbers
Garlic
Green Beans
Greens – spinach, turnip, collards
Lettuce – iceburg, romaine
Onions – yellow or Vidalia in season
Radishes
Squash – includes yellow and zucchini
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes – on-the-vine, plum
White Potatoes – russet, red-skinned, golden



Apples

FRUIT

Apples
Bananas
Citrus
Grapes
Guava
Melons
Nectarines
Peaches
Pears
Plums

-----NON-PERISHABLES

Non-perishables are essential for saving money and providing a solid base to your diet. If you live in storm, fire, or earthquake country, these also come in handy for go-bags.

GRAINS

Barley -- pearled barley takes longer to cook but instant is okay, for soups and hot cereal

Brown Rice -- not cheap but if you like it, buy in bulk

Cornmeal -- cornbread, cornpone, polenta, and as a soup-thickener

Egg Noodles -- good for cold salads, or fortifying soups/stews

Oatmeal -- old-fashioned is heartier, instant is gentler

Pasta -- spaghetti, rotini, shells, etc

Self-Rising Flour -- saves time in kitchen, and only slightly more expensive than cake flour, which is used primarily in gravies and cookies

White Rice -- choose long-grain over more expensive instant

DRY BEANS

Black -- popular in Latin and Asian dishes

Dark Red Kidney -- more flavorful than its lighter cousin

Great Northern -- a large, bland white bean

Light Red Kidney -- more delicate in relation to darker cousin

Lima -- acquired taste, cooks very slow

Navy -- similar to Great Northerns, great slow-simmered with tomato and brown sugar

Pinto -- mild flavor is essential in Spanish cooking

Red -- similar to kidney beans, but smaller

DRY LEGUMES

Black-Eyed Peas -- classic addition to Southern and Creole cookery

Lentils -- these can be yellow, red or brown, full of vitamins

Split Peas -- best as a hearty soup with potatoes and onions

BEVERAGES

Cocoa -- crucial in the depths of winter; also good in baking

Coffee -- if you have a maker, go for the cheaper Latin blends or Espresso

Tea -- plain black, in tagless pouches, is cheapest



Stir-Fry and Rice

-----**CANNED AND FROZEN**

Keep a steady supply of canned and frozen goods on hand. Some stores offer good deals on specific mass-produced vegetables, like corn, green beans, tomatoes, and peas. Get low or no-salt canned varieties where available. These are not just healthier, they're great when you need drinkable water if there's an emergency -- salted veggies like corn, tomatoes, and green beans will only make you thirstier.

CANNED GOODS

Beets

Chili Beans

Corn

Green Beans

Mixed Vegetables -- try blends without potatoes, which tend to dull flavor

Peas

Tomatoes -- diced, with garlic or Italian seasoning; paste, and plain sauce; salsa

FROZEN VEGETABLES

Chopped Broccoli

Chopped Spinach -- especially good in stews or braising

Corn

Green Beans

Green Peas

Greens

Mixed Vegetables -- blends vary; stock up on sale items

Peas & Carrots

-----DAIRY & MISCELLANEOUS

Unless you are a devout vegan, dairy products fortify a healthy diet, and are a good, cheap source of vitamins.

DAIRY

Cottage Cheese -- dieting essential also good for desserts and Latin cuisine

Eggs -- a dozen can last two weeks on a sort of one-a-day plan

Margarine -- non-dairy alternative to butter is also cheaper

Milk -- skim is best for adults, whole or Vitamin D for kids

Sandwich Cheese -- cheaper than brick-cheese, multiple uses

Yogurt -- plain is best for you, just flavor with fresh fruit, or use in salads

MISCELLANEOUS

Corn Tortillas -- a must for Mexican fare, as well as stir-fry, salads, et al

Dark Brown Sugar -- less-sweet than white sugar, best used sparingly in sauces and baked goods

Instant Mashed Potatoes -- go-to comfort food is also good soup thickener

Instant Vegetable Broth -- essential for soups, rice or pasta dishes, and braising

Non-Dairy Topping -- is great mixed with fresh diced or mashed fruit and yogurt, and served icy cold as a sub for expensive ice cream

Peanut Butter -- crunchy for sandwiches, granola, cookies; smooth for Thai cooking

Raisins -- Generally the cheapest dried fruit available, is ideal for out-of-hand snacking, also in baked goods, cooked with rice, or in salads

Ramen Noodles -- cooked as pasta, great in similar dishes and with stir-fry -- pass the soup packets, which make 2 cups of salty soup, along to your non-vegetarian pals

White Bread -- look for the blended-grain types versus the 'wonder' kind; sandwiches, sopping up juices and sauces

Whole-Wheat Bread -- keeps ya regular, but limit to one or two slices a day, toasted

Sample \$29 Grocery Bill (Hillsborough County, Florida, August 2018):

½ gallon milk

½ dozen eggs

1 ½ pounds bananas

1 pound tomatoes

1 pound carrots

3 pound bag of apples

1 head of celery

4 sweet potatoes

1 box vegetarian soup cubes

1 18-ct package corn tortillas

1 loaf whole-wheat bread

3 pound bag of rice

1 package lentils

1 package dried red beans

TYPES OF COOKING

Baking: savory or spicy batter slow-dried into breads, or other ingredients into casseroles

Boiling: cooking in large amount of water or broth

Braising: slow-cooking of vegetables in small amount of liquid

Roasting or Broiling: cooking vegetables at high heat until they crisp (before burning!)

Salad: one or more food items are dressed in salad oil and herbs, vinegar, or citrus juices, or with a mayo-based sauce. This can be raw or cooked.

Soup: cooking food in large amount of liquid to stretch your food budget

Steaming: similar to braising, but where vegetables are raised above boiling water

Stewing: cooking food in medium-large amounts of liquid, resulting in a chunky dish

Stir-frying: cooking vegetables quickly in pan greased with hot oil



Cottage Cheese and Fresh Fruit

BASIC RECIPES

Fruit Salad and Cheese

1 cup cottage cheese

2 cups fresh fruit in season

1-2 leaves lettuce

Place cheese on lettuce and surround with fruit. A simple, low-calorie meal or dessert.

Potato Salad

Figure on one of each per person:

1 diced and boiled large (1 cup worth) russet or red-skinned potato
1 hard-boiled egg
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup chopped celery
1 heaping tablespoon mayo

Mix thoroughly, season with pepper or herbs, and serve warm or cold. Substitute sweet potato for white for a healthier version.

Spaghetti For One

1 cup fresh-cooked pasta, your choice
1/2 cup tomato sauce, or 1/4 cup tomato paste and 1/4 cup boiling water
1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning
1/2 teaspoon powdered garlic / onion

Mix together and serve hot. Plain ramen noodles can sub for regular pasta. Optional quarter-cup mixed veg or spinach give more vitamins.

Fortified Lentils and Rice

2 cups water
1 cup rice
1 cube vegetable broth
1/2 cup lentils
1 carrot, pared in strips
1/4 cup frozen chopped spinach

Bring water to a boil on medium heat. Cook lentils, carrot and spinach for 20 minutes. Add rice and broth cube, and lower heat to simmer, covered, for additional 20 minutes.

Light Cheese Tacos

1 cup cottage cheese
1 cup diced fresh tomato
1/2 tsp basil, or Italian seasoning
1/4 cup minced onion
3 corn tortillas, toasted

Mix first four ingredients together and spoon into tortillas.

Braised Vegetables

1 sweet potato, diced thickly
1 white potato, ditto
1 onion, sliced
1 large carrot, sliced
1 cup diced celery
1 cube vegetable broth
1/2 cup tomato sauce
2 cups water

Bring water and broth cube to a boil. Add vegetables, lower heat to medium, and simmer for at least 1/2 hour. Add tomato sauce, and season with Italian, Complete, or curry powder; cook additional 15 minutes. Serve hot with a slice of bread or noodles. Enough for two.

Muesli

1 cup oatmeal
1 oz raisins
2 teaspoons canola oil
1 teaspoon brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
Optional 2 teaspoons milk

Mix thoroughly. This is also good with margarine or peanut butter subbing for canola oil.

Tomato Cucumber Salad

1 large tomato, sliced thin
1 peeled cucumber, sliced thin
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup red vinegar, or fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons canola oil
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning, or basil

Mix thoroughly and refrigerate at least one hour, occasionally remixing ingredients. A nice summer salad.

Curried Corn Spread

½ cup canned corn
1 Tbsp mayo
½ teaspoon curry powder
¼ teaspoon onion powder

Mix thoroughly and spread on toasted bread and cheese for sandwich.

Stir-Fry and Veggie Rice

1 onion sliced
1 stalk celery sliced
1 carrot sliced
1 cup sliced cabbage, or spinach
2 Tablespoons canola oil
2 teaspoons soy sauce
1 teaspoon ginger

Fry vegetables quickly in heated oil. Season with soy sauce and ginger. Serve on rice cooked with minced onion, shredded carrot, and frozen peas.

Crunch Sandwiches

1 carrot, pared
or 1 celery stick sliced in 3-inch pieces
or sandwich-sized pieces of lettuce
1 slice cheese
2 teaspoons mayo or ketchup
2 slices toasted whole-wheat bread

Spread toast with mayo or ketchup. Lay on veggie of choice, and top with optional slice of cheese and other slice of toast and enjoy. Mix it up for a vegetarian Dagwood with a slice of tomato or shredded cabbage.

Garbanzo Salad

1 cup cooked garbanzo beans
1 diced tomato
1 diced celery stalk
1 diced carrot
1 tablespoon canola oil
2 teaspoons vinegar or lemon / lime juice
1 teaspoon garlic powder

Mix together and serve warm or cold, or over shredded lettuce, or cold cooked rice.

Banana Mash

1 ripe banana
1 heaping tablespoon crunchy peanut butter
1 tablespoon oatmeal
1 teaspoon brown sugar

Mash banana with other ingredients to a pudding consistency. Serve as is or as a filling for pancakes. Try using other over-ripe (but not rotten) fruit, like pears, peaches, et al.

RECOMMENDED READING

The Vegetarian Five-Ingredient Gourmet, by Nava Atlas, 2001

-- Some of the ingredients are pricey but an experienced frugal cook knows how to substitute. Atlas includes suggested menus for daily meals.

The Laurel Health Cookery, by Evora Bucknum Perkins, 1911

-- Avoid the 'True Meat' dishes made from archaic blends of nuts and focus on the basic recipes; this volume is available free on Project Gutenberg.

The Frugal Vegetarian Cookbook, by Matt Pierard, 2016

-- Self-explanatory Creative Commons copyrighted volume available on Internet Archive.

PHOTO SOURCES

Apples

USDA

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/ee/Apples.jpg/320px-Apples.jpg>

Basil,

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Luogo: Genova

Data: marzo 2006

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Tomatoes

Description

June 28 180/366

Date 28 June 2008, 08:21

Source "farmer's market"

Author Rhett Maxwell

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Stir-Fry

Description

English: Stir fry veggie with stir fry vegetables

Date 27 March 2009, 20:03:50

Source Own work

Author Pradeepraajkumar1981

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Fresh Fruit and Cottage Cheese

Description

A nutritious snack of grapes, cottage cheese and cantaloupe is prepared at a school in St. Petersburg, FL on January 15, 2003. USDA photo.